

# Lift up in prayer those who work for change

Change is coming to Baltimore. I saw it last week when The Baltimore Interfaith Coalition gathered together in the "Vigil Against Violence," and I saw it the week before that when the new mayor-in-waiting named her transition team.

Galvanized to make a difference and to stop the hurt and pain of violence, the Baltimore Interfaith Coalition was formed (with strong Catholic roots) in the fall of 2009. It is a coalition of faith communities that collaborate in efforts to bring hope to a hurting city. The result is the first ongoing and cooperative effort of interfaith leaders to take place in Baltimore since the Civil Rights Movement.

Let's face it, violence is such a complicated disease which requires a unified triage approach. If healing is the end result, then applications of spiritual ointment mixed with a comprehensive plan of action for recovery is a must.

From all over Baltimore City, people of good will from various faiths - Catholics, Baptists, Jews, Episcopalians, Muslims, Buddhists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Hindus and so many more gathered to "combat this culture of violence." Members of the coalition state "For us, true faith is not a purely passive virtue by which we accept and trust in God's promise, but an active response to God's call, in which we join in God's identification with those suffering violence and injustice."

The result is the Movement Against Violence - an ongoing effort to mobilize faith communities through the joint service projects that promote healing and hope to those who are affected by violence. Folks signed up to be active in several projects that will establish a unified wave of peace and a stream of hope. Change is coming.

I saw change coming when one among us was designated to the transition team for the new mayor of Baltimore. Nina R. Harper is a life-long member of historic St. Francis Xavier Church and a community activist. Since high school, Nina has had a special interest in the spiritual welfare of people. She was a leader then and a leader

now. It's in her genes to be particularly concerned for those who are economically vulnerable or marginalized. People matter to her and she illustrates it through her ministry at St. Francis Xavier or at the Oliver Community Center where she serves as director. She has been active with the works of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, The Knights of Peter Claver-Ladies Auxiliary and the Office of African American Catholic Ministries.

Nina R. Harper has served God's people through:

-